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ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1984, the status of 131 students in Canada's 1980-81 junior kindergarten classes and 587 students in 1981-82 classes was documented by a follow-up study. Analyses consisted of frequency distributions for each relevant variable, compiled separately for students identified as "model" or "compensatory" in each junior kindergarten cohort. For both cohorts, results indicated that compensatory students are much more likely than students in general to receive unfavorable early identification ratings. Conversely, model students are less likely than students in general to receive unfavorable ratings. These trends were more marked for the early follow-up years and for the 1980-81 cohort. Data additionally showed a slightly greater tendency for children in the compensatory group to either repeat a grade or to be enrolled in a special class. It was concluded that a significant number of compensatory junior kindergarten students require continuing special attention. (RH)

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# THE JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN CLASSES OF 1980-81 AND 1981-82: SPRING OF 1984 FOLLOWUP

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*Research Report 84-08*

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# THE JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN CLASSES OF 1980-81 AND 1981-82:
# SPRING OF 1984 FOLLOWUP

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During the Spring of 1980 a screening process was implemented to identify four-year-old children who would be appropriate candidates for the Board's compensatory Junior Kindergarten (JK) program. This process, described elsewhere (Stennett & Earl, 1980), identified about one quarter of the students who were screened as 'models' of normal development, with the remainder selected on the basis of need for a compensatory program. The selection process involved the pooled ratings of a public health nurse, primary consultant and speech and language teacher...each of whom conducted an independent examination of each child. The process was applied to a limited sample of 179 candidates.

In the subsequent year this screening process was simplified (Stennett and Earl, 1981), with the selection process relying upon the combined ratings of a Junior Kindergarten teacher and public health nurse. This revised screening process was applied to 746 children. However, because of some administrative difficulties, complete data were not available for all children. About 80% of all children who applied were accepted into the program, with 'model' and 'compensatory' children present in a ratio of about 1 to 4.

An initial followup of the JK class of 1980-81 (Stennett and Earl, 1982) examined the relationships of the JK screening results to Language Screening Test Scores (KLST) and Early Identification Ratings (EID) done in January and May, respectively, of the Kindergarten year (1982). This study found only modest relationships between the JK screening ratings and later measures of language development. However, while few children identified as 'models' in the screening process had unfavourable EID ratings (2 or 3), 40 to 50% of the 'compensatory' children did.

The current interim followup study of both the 1980-81 and 1981-82 JK samples simply attempts to document the spring of 1984 status of the children involved. Within each sample students' status is described separately for children identified as either 'model' or 'compensatory' at the time of entry to the JK program.

Since no relevant control groups are available, the findings in this report cannot be used to evaluate the success of the JK program. The only reference points, system-level data on EID ratings, are provided where possible.

## *METHOD*

*Samples* All students in the 1980-81 and 1981-82 JK classes who were screened and for whom relevant data could be obtained were included in this study, 131 and 587 students respectively.

*Followup procedure* Using original computer files on the 1980-81 and 1981-82 JK classes as the starting point, the procedure for each year of followup included the following steps: (1) The annual EID screening files were reviewed to identify any target students enrolled in Kindergarten to grade 3 and, if found, the EID ratings were added to their files. (2) The lists of all special class students were reviewed to locate any students not identified by step 1 above. If a student appeared on a special class list, this fact was coded into his JK file. (3) A phone call was made to the last known school for each student not located by steps 1 and 2 above. Any student who could not be located by these three steps was considered to have left the system.

*Data analyses* The basic analyses, conducted by computer using standard programs (SPSSX), consisted simply of compiling frequency distributions for each relevant variable, separately for students identified as 'model' or 'compensatory', for each JK cohort.

## *RESULTS*

Table 1 gives the percent of students receiving EID ratings of 2 or 3 in Reading and Mathematics for each followup year, separately for each JK cohort and separately for 'model' and 'compensatory' students within each cohort. Comparable 'system values', derived from EID ratings done annually on all students from Kindergarten to Grade 3, are provided for reference purposes. An examination of this table indicates that, for both JK cohorts, 'compensatory' students are much more likely than 'students in general' to receive unfavorable EID ratings. Conversely, 'model' students are less likely than 'students in general' to receive unfavorable EID ratings. These trends are more marked for the early followup years and for the 1980-81 JK cohort.

Tables 2(a) and 2(b) give the educational status for each followup year, separately for 'model' and 'compensatory' students, for the 1980-81 and 1981-82 JK cohorts respectively. These data show a slightly greater tendency for 'compensatory' children to either repeat a grade or be enroled in a special class.

## *DISCUSSION*

Although it is not possible from the data available to asses the impact of the junior Kindergarten program, it is clear that a significant number of the 'compensatory' JK students require continuing special attention.

The more careful screening system applied to the 1980-81 JK students seems to have differentiated 'model' and 'compensatory' students more effectively. With the possible advent of a universal JK program and consequent abandoning of any screening process, decisions will be required about whether and how to extend the early identification process to the JK level. The use of some or all of the original screening procedures as part of that process might be considered.

*SUMMARY*

The Junior Kindergarten classes of 1980-81 and 1981-82 were followed to the spring of 1984. The early identification ratings and educational status for each followup year were summarized separately for 'model' and 'compensatory' students in each cohort. It is clear that the 'compensatory' students require continuing special attention.

TABLE 1 Early Identification Ratings (EID) for each followup year for the Junior Kindergarten (JK) cohorts of 1980-81 and 1981-82.

| Variable | JK Class of 1980-81 | | System | JK Class of 1981-82 | | System |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | Compensatory | Values | Model | Compensatory | Values |
| Number of cases | 46 | 85 | - | 111 | 476 | - |
| % Month of Birth 7 to 12 | 33 | 55 | 49 | 31 | 52 | 49 |
| % Male | 39 | 60 | 52 | 3[illegible] | 55 | 52 |
| % 1981 EID ratings of 2 or 3-Language | 6.7 | 40.8 | 21.0(K) | - | - | - |
| % 1981 EID ratings of 2 or 3-Math | 2.2 | 27.1 | 16.8(K) | - | - | - |
| % 1982 EID ratings of 2 or 3-Reading | 4.3 | 46.3 | 29.0(1) | 12.2 | 34.6 | 21.0(K) |
| % 1982 EID ratings of 2 or 3-Math | 4.3 | 41.8 | 21.9(1) | 7.3 | 26.4 | 16.8(K) |
| % 1983 EID ratings of 2 or 3-Reading | 16.2 | 50.0 | 22.9(2) | 19.5 | 43.2 | 29.0(1) |
| % 1983 EID ratings of 2 or 3- Math | 18.9 | 38.0 | 17.3(2) | 12.6 | 34.5 | 21.9(1) |

TABLE 2(a) Percent of 1980-81 JK students occupying each educational status during each followup year.

| Group | Followup Year | Educational Status | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | K | Gr. 1 | Gr. 2 | Spec. class |
| Model | 1981 | 100.0 | | | |
| | 1982 | | 100.0 | | |
| | 1983 | | 2.5 | 97.5 | |
| Compensatory | 1981 | 100.0 | | | |
| | 1982 | | 98.7 | | 1.3 |
| | 1983 | | 11.3 | 87.3 | 1.4 |

TABLE 2(b) Percent of 1981-82 JK students occupying each educational status during each followup year.

| Group | Followup Year | Educational Status | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | K | Gr. 1 | Special class |
| Model | 1982 | 100.0 | | |
| | 1983 | | 98.8 | 1.2 |
| Compensatory | 1982 | 100.0 | | |
| | 1983 | .3 | 97.3 | 2.5 |

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